



How to use  
Ladybird Readers

# How to use Ladybird Readers

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# Introducing Ladybird Readers



The *Ladybird Readers* series has been leveled by experts to gradually introduce key words to learners of English as they begin their reading journey.

The levels follow the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and support students who are taking the Cambridge English Young Learners (YLE) exams. For more information on the CEFR and YLE exams, please see page 6.

Ladybird Books, part of Penguin Random House, is an internationally recognized publisher of children's books, and has produced high-quality reading material for more than 100 years. *Ladybird Readers* builds on this reputation to provide an experience of reading a variety of short, whole books as recommended by the **Extensive Reading Foundation** (<http://erfoundation.org/wordpress>).

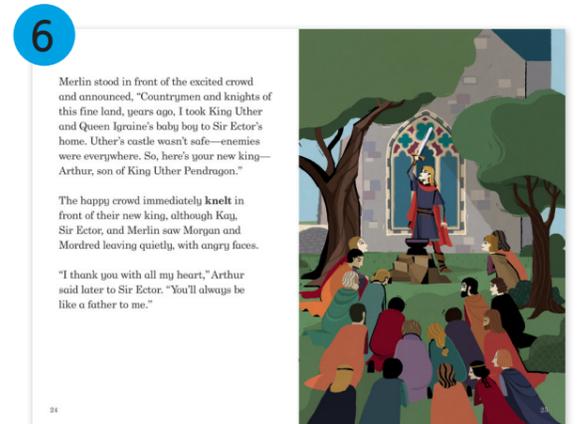
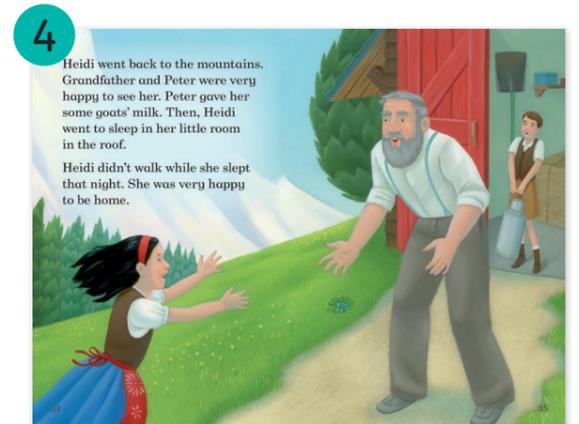
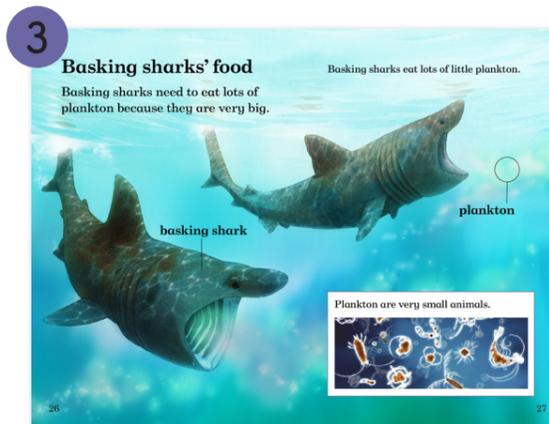
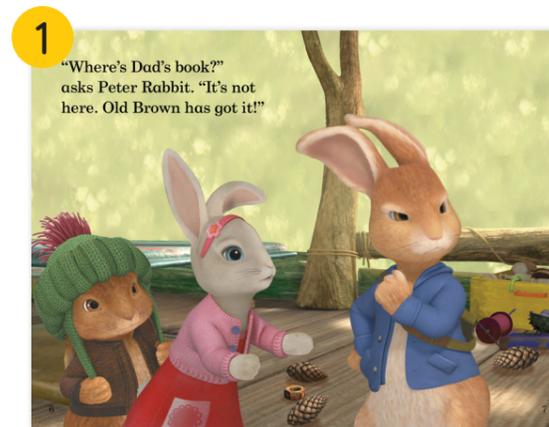
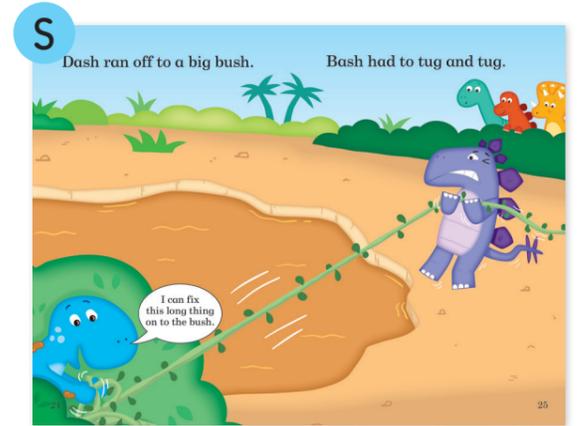
Teachers, parents, and children can choose:

- **Traditional stories** children may know already, such as *Rapunzel* and *Aladdin*.
- Stories about much-loved **character brands** like *Peter Rabbit*, *Moomins*, *Transformers* or *Peppa Pig*.
- Stories of **everyday adventures** featuring children like themselves.

- **Nonfiction books** about the world around them, including *BBC Earth* and *Scuderia Ferrari* titles.

Ladybird is famous for the quality of the illustrations that accompany the words. Great care has been taken to match a small number of words with a large illustrated scene, so that children can check the meaning of the words.

Ladybird works with the best artists to produce beautiful illustrations that **support understanding** of the story.



# Why do we need graded readers?

Reading is the most important skill that children learn. It is the key to learning about the world for themselves. Graded reading books are shorter and simpler than normal books, and give a step-by-step path to independent reading. They gradually introduce new vocabulary and sentence structures at a pace that allows children to gain confidence as they learn to read.

Young English-language learners benefit from specially written books that grade the language based on words they already know, while providing an opportunity to learn a handful of extra words via a glossary or **Picture words** section. Graded readers for beginners will use just 25 to 200 words, most of which children will recognize from their English lessons.

As children learn more English, they move up a step to a level of graded reader that uses more words in slightly longer texts. This approach is motivating because learners can see how they are progressing, and discover that they can read and enjoy narrative texts in English.

Graded readers help to improve the fluency of children's reading by providing **extensive reading**. Extensive reading is about giving children a variety of books, including nonfiction titles, and encouraging them to read at least one book every two weeks. Reading widely helps children to learn about the different ways of organizing meaning in books. For example, they learn the difference between **stories**, which organize events in a **storyline**, and **nonfiction** texts, which organize information into **classifications**.

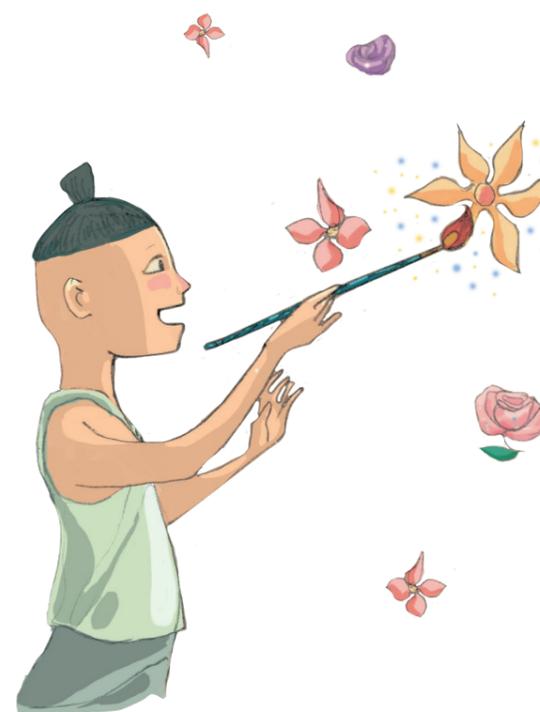
Ladybird Readers levels	
Beginner	First Phrases • 25—50 words
Starter	Pre-A1 • 50—100 words
Level 1	Pre-A1 • YLE Starters • 100—200 words
Level 2	A1 • YLE Movers • 200—300 words
Level 3	A1+ • YLE Movers • 300—600 words
Level 4	A2 • YLE Flyers • 600—900 words
Level 5	A2 • YLE Flyers / KET • 900—1,500 words
Level 6	A2 • YLE Flyers / KET • 1,500—2,000 words

# How children learn to read

## “Top-down” processing to understand meaning

Children usually learn to read in their first language between the ages of five and eight. They start by listening to an adult read while they follow the pictures in a book and gradually realize that the printed sentences match the information they hear.

Using familiar, traditional stories like *Cinderella* or *Little Red Riding Hood* is a great way to begin reading in a foreign language because children often already know the storylines. Once children know the content of the story, they can pay attention to what each sentence really means, rather than just reading the words. This is called **“top-down” processing** because children work from comprehension of the whole meaning of the story in a **mental map**, down to the recognition of individual sentences and words.



## “Bottom-up” processing from individual words

Children also begin to recognize how letter sounds combine to make a whole word, for example, how the letters **c**, **a**, and **t** make the sound of the word “cat”. Then, they learn how individual words form sentences. This is called **“bottom-up” processing** because reading is built up from small parts. It is also referred to as **“decoding”**, as children learn how letter sounds combine to make words.

Children whose first language does not use the English alphabet will need to spend time learning the alphabet sounds. Then, they can play with individual letter cards to make words. It is best to start with words such as *look*, *book*, and *cook*, which have regular correspondences between how they sound and they are spelled. This is called the **phonics** approach to reading.



## Becoming a fluent reader

All children use the same **top-down** and **bottom-up processes** in reading, whether they are reading in a foreign language or their first language.

However, there is a big difference in the number of words children know. In their first language, beginner readers will know around 2,000 words in spoken language. When learning a foreign language, children only meet about 500 words in their first 100 hours of learning, and they will only remember some of those words.

# Ladybird Readers levels

## Common European Framework of Reference

Most teaching programs and textbooks for learners of English as a foreign language are based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). This framework describes how learners use simple language to communicate at a basic level (A1) and then progress toward communications that require more vocabulary and longer grammatical structures (B1 upward). The aim of most primary language teaching is to ensure that each child becomes a Basic User of English at the A1 or A2 level of the CEFR. English textbooks for young learners often introduce simplified language at this Basic User level. This same simplified language is used as a grading framework for the early levels of *Ladybird Readers*.

At the Basic User level, children encounter the most common, everyday words that are short and easily remembered. Experts have created the word lists for each level of the *Ladybird Readers* with this aim in mind. Each Reader also introduces some new words that are specific to the story or topic.

## Cambridge English: Young Learners Exams

As well as using the CEFR as their guiding framework, the *Ladybird Readers* series is also leveled according to the Cambridge English: Young Learners (YLE) exams syllabus.

Children can take the YLE official assessment to grade their reading and writing skills. The table below shows how each *Ladybird Readers* level fits with these assessments. When your class or child completes the activities at the back of a *Ladybird Readers* book, you will notice that many activities are marked  to show they are practicing skills for the YLE.

## Accelerated Reader and Lexile measures

Each Reader has its Lexile measure on the back cover, and this information is also given in the Lesson plans for easy reference. The series is also leveled against the Accelerated Reader program.

## How *Ladybird Readers* levels fit with the CEFR and YLE exam levels

	CEFR Level	Cambridge Young Learners English Exams level (YLE)
<b>Beginner</b>	First Phrases	Pre-YLE Starters
<b>Starter</b>	Pre-A1	Pre-YLE Starters
<b>Level 1</b>	Pre-A1	YLE Starters
<b>Level 2</b>	A1	YLE Movers
<b>Level 3</b>	A1+	YLE Movers
<b>Level 4</b>	A2	YLE Flyers
<b>Level 5</b>	A2	YLE Flyers / KET
<b>Level 6</b>	A2	YLE Flyers / KET

## Assessing children's progress in reading

Children's progress in reading usually follows these stages.

### 1 Beginner stage (Beginner to Level 1)

At the first stage, children will use **bottom-up** processes to start to identify the sounds made by the letters, and will rely on their knowledge of the **top-down** general meaning of the story. They will use clues from the pictures and the shape of a word.



# Ladybird Readers components

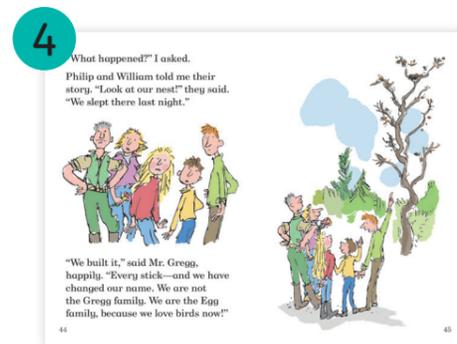
## 2 Mastering decoding (Levels 2 to 3)

At this stage, young learners will be able to recognize familiar words and read short parts of the text with clear pronunciation.



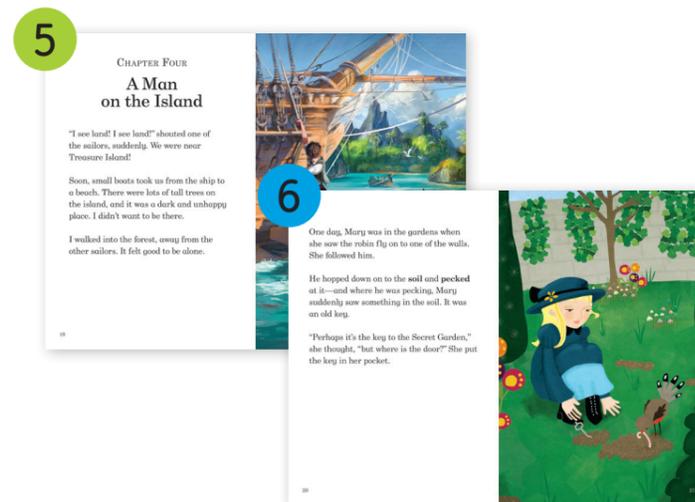
## 3 Reading independently (Level 4)

At this stage, young learners will be able to use both **top-down** and **bottom-up** strategies independently with graded readers. They are ready to read on their own and to choose their own books.



## 4 Established readers (Levels 5 to 6)

At this stage, young learners will be confident readers, able to categorize information from the text, retell and summarize the stories, predict events, and understand the characters and their motives.



A range of graded **Readers** sit at the heart of the *Ladybird Readers* series, providing leveled reading practice through new fiction, popular characters, traditional tales, and nonfiction. Each Reader has a visual glossary of Picture words, as well as activities to develop and consolidate children's language skills.

Each Reader (in Starter to Level 4) has an accompanying **Activity Book**, which gives children further opportunities to practice reading, writing, spelling, listening, and speaking in English. It also includes a fun song or chant to reinforce key vocabulary from the Reader.

## Free downloads

- Flexible, title-specific **Lesson Plans** provide further activities and guidance for using the Readers in the classroom or at home.
- An **Answer Key** is available for every Reader and Activity Book, and also contains scripts for the listening activities.
- **Audio** downloads are available in both British and American English. These include recordings of the Reader text, listening activities, and the song or chant for each title.
- **Role plays** are available for every fiction Reader, giving students the opportunities to bring the stories to life.
- **Flashcards** are available for every level from Starter to Level 6, and contain cards featuring the sounds and words used in the Readers.

These resources and more are available to download from: [www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

# Beginner level

The Beginner level gently introduces children to their first phrases in English.

Everyday conversational phrases, such as *Good Morning, where is it?*, and *how many?* are presented in simple, repeated sentences. The story illustrations can be used to introduce topic-based vocabulary when the children are ready.

Simple activities are included at the back of each Beginner-level book. These activities encourage children to practice the phrases introduced in the story and help them begin to use the phrases in real-life situations.



# Starter-level structure

The Starter level is designed to be a shared reading experience. An expert reader can help beginner readers as they take their first English reading steps.

and practicing the pronunciation of each sound. The second version introduces sight words, first on their own and then used in full sentences.

Each Starter-level Reader has two versions of the story: The first version introduces the phonemes (sounds), for example, s a t p i n. Go through these phonemes, listening to

Activities at the back of the Reader provide further practice of the phonemes and sight words, and give opportunities to talk about the story content.

Starter	Title	Phonics	Sight Words	Theme
1	Alphabet Book	A-Z		
2	Is it Nat?	s a t p i n	a is it	Who am I?
3	Nat Sits	s a t p i n	an in sit	Feeling safe
4	Top Dog and Pompom	m d g o c k	and can I into no	Staying calm
5	Top Dog is Sick	m d g o c k	got not	Caring for others
6	The Fun Run	e u r h b f l	at get go has off the to up	Taking part
7	Gus is Hot!	e u r h b f l	full his of on put	Following instructions
8	Jazz the Vet	j v w x y z qu	be but had he him she tell was	Helping others
9	Vick the Vet	j v w x y z qu	did well will	Helping others
10	Dash and Thud	ch sh th ng	if ran then they with yes	Looking after each other
11	Big Bad Bash	ch sh th ng	big long that this	Friendship
12	The Big Fish	ai ee oa oo	her look see them	Being careful
13	The Big Ship	ai ee oa oo	let me my too	Exploring our world
14	Martin and Lorna	ar or ur ow oi er	all are for	Being grateful
15	Farmer Carl	ar or ur ow oi er	cut down good help now	Being helpful
16	The Big Dipper	igh ear air ure	as have like said some went you	Being brave
17	The Silver Ring	igh ear air ure	come from so stop we what	Being patient

# Phonics in English Language Teaching

## What is phonics?

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read by helping them to understand the relationships between letters, sounds, and words. It is a popular teaching method for native English speakers, and is increasingly used with children who are learning English as a foreign language. This is because it gives children the tools they need to improve their reading, writing, and pronunciation.

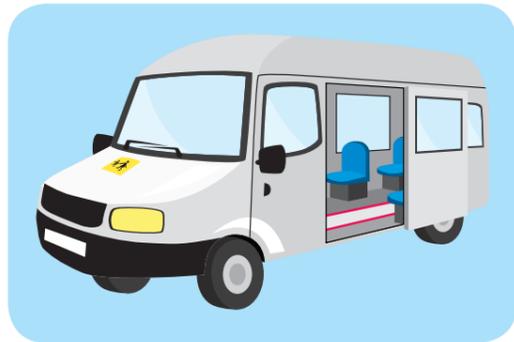
The English alphabet has 26 letters, but approximately 42 related sounds. Phonics teaching helps children to identify sounds that relate to individual letters, such as /ɑ/ in **cat**, as well as sounds that relate to combinations of letters, such as /ear/ in **hear**.

With this understanding, children will be able to read, spell, and pronounce new and more complex words in the future.

Children learn how to read by blending sounds to make a word:



hat → h/a/t → "hat"



bus → b/u/s → "bus"

They learn how to spell by segmenting a word into sounds:



"boat" → b/oa/t → boat



"look" → l/oo/k → look

## How can I introduce phonics?

Phonics teaching can be introduced in the classroom or at home using short activities and games.

Make children aware of sounds common in English and the children's first language wherever possible. Use words the children know to highlight and identify sounds.

### 1 Use Flashcards or objects



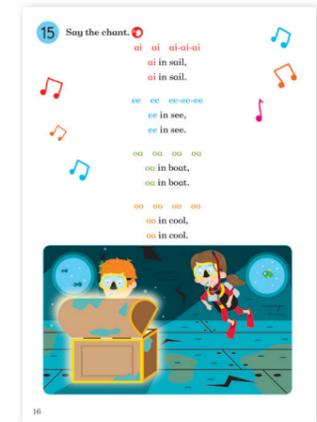
- **Find the sound:** stick a selection of Flashcards on the wall, or put them down on the floor or table. Ask the children to find words with a particular sound, such as /e/. Try using a different sound each day.
- **Sound pairs:** ask the children to sort through the Flashcards to find words with matching sounds, such as *beard* and *gears*, or *tap* and *tin*.
- **Sound craft:** select a sound of the week. Draw, paint, and decorate a large cut-out of the letters that represent the sound. The children should find objects or Flashcards containing that sound to create a sound display table.

### 2 Use chants, songs, and rhymes

Help the children to become familiar with natural rhythm and rhyme, by learning traditional nursery rhymes, songs, and chants.

A phonics chant is included at the back of every *Ladybird Readers Starter Activity Book*, and audio downloads of the chants are available on the website:

[www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)



### 3 Use story books or graded readers

Storytelling helps children to develop linguistically, cognitively, and emotionally. Stories explore familiar themes and provide a playful and imaginative context for children to experiment with the sounds of English.

They contain high-frequency words, such as animals, family, and food, as well as words such as *dragon*, *pirate*, and *giant*, which inspire children's imaginations.



The *Ladybird Readers Starter* level uses age-appropriate, engaging storytelling to introduce a phonics approach to reading.

# Inside a Starter Reader

## Phonics focus (Reader pages 4—5)

Phonics focus	Activity
<p>j v w x y z qu</p> <p>van Jen liquid yellow mix zebra wet zoo Vick</p>	<p>1 Say the sounds. Circle the word with the same sound. 🎧 🗣️</p> <p>1 v mix <b>Vick</b> wet</p> <p>2 v Jen jet vet</p> <p>3 z zebra Vick wet</p> <p>4 j liquid zoo Jen</p>
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm 4	Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz 5

The phonemes on this page are the key sounds to practice with your children, offering them an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the sounds before you move on and read the story.

The phonemes are visually represented and can be listened to in the audio download. Pay particular attention to the pronunciation of the sounds and try not to lengthen it unnecessarily. For example we say 'ss' not 'ssss', and 'p' and not 'puh'.

Then, blend the sounds together to read the words underneath the pictures and point to the phonemes in their written form (graphemes), as you follow the letters with your finger.

These pages can be used:

- to introduce new phonemes
- to practice learners' previous knowledge
- to focus on pronunciation
- to explore simple oral blending and segmenting of phonemes

### Activities

- Listen to the audio and point to the graphemes that represent the phonemes you can hear.
- Practice saying the sounds together.
- Practice grapheme-phoneme correspondence (GPCs): Ask, "Can you point to the /s/ sound?"
- Complete the simple activity on page 5 to reinforce the learning of these focus phonemes.

## Look at the story (Reader pages 6—15)



The **Look at the story** pages contain the book illustrations and simple words that include some of the phonics focus sounds from pages 4—5, but there is no story text at this stage. Looking at these pages prepares the children for reading and listening to the full story. They can practice blending the key sounds to read simple words, gaining vital reading confidence as they do so.

### Activities

- Encourage the children to use their phonics knowledge to blend the sounds together and read the words.
- Give the children time to have a go themselves but if they get stuck on a sound or word, remind them what it is and move on to the next one. You can always return to it later on if you wish.
- Talk about the pictures together and ask simple questions, such as "What kind of animal is Top Dog?"
- Use the Flashcards and say, "Find a /p/ word." Make letter headbands for some of the children to wear, with a focus sound on each one. Give the rest of the children a Flashcard. Their task is to find the child wearing a headband with their sound and sit down together in groups.

## Read the story (Reader pages 16—27)



Vick is a vet. She gets into a yellow van to visit Jen.

Jen runs the zoo.

The **Read the story** pages can be read aloud or listened to alongside the audio download. Begin by looking at the sight words on page 17 of the Reader. Sight words are sometimes called high-frequency words because they are words that are common in the English language. As these words are used so frequently, it is a good idea for children to memorize them so they can be read fluently and easily. The more these sight words are read and practiced, the more the children will remember them. This will develop reading confidence.

The first time you read the story, you may prefer it to be an extended listening activity for the children, so that they can enjoy the story without interruption. Encourage the children to listen to and look at you so they can see the expression you put into your reading. They will learn how your voice changes when making statements and asking questions, and how dialogue sounds different to narration. For example,

you might read the page above in a happy, cheerful voice!

The second time you read or listen to the story, ask the children to follow the words with their finger or do some of these activities.

### Activities

- Ask the children to turn to a certain page and find a sight word. They could stand up when they find it.
- As you read together, ask questions, such as “Is he happy?”, “Why?”, “Why not?”.
- Ask the children to listen to the story and shout, “Stop!” when they hear a sight word or a focus sound they are practicing. Congratulate them and then continue the story.
- Check the children have understood the story by asking questions such as “What happened in the end?” or “What was your favorite bit of the story?”

## Reader activities (Reader pages 28—31)

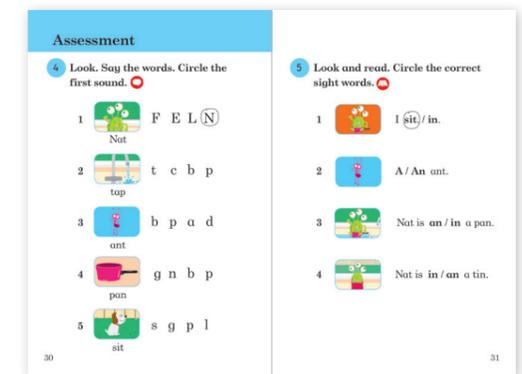
### Phonics

The Readers include a wide range of phonics activities, which require the children to differentiate and associate sounds in words. Further activities ask the children to find and circle a particular sound or a specific sight word, or to circle words with the same sound. The activities often encourage children to say a sound aloud as they read it on the page.



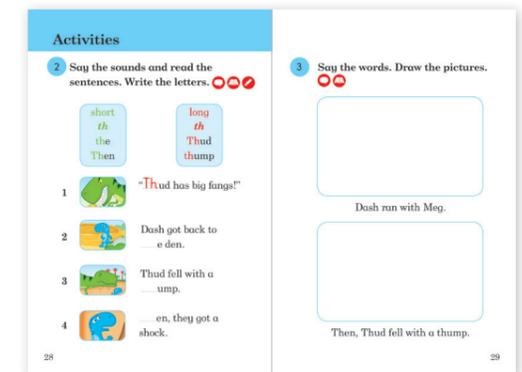
### Decoding words and building sentences

These activities ask children to blend or segment words to build simple sentences. Tasks include completing words using focus sounds or finishing sentences using sight words. The activities encourage children to blend the words for reading and to segment the words for spelling and writing.



### Comprehension of meaning

There are also activities to check the children’s comprehension of story content. These activities often focus on reading the word or sentence and circling the correct word to complete it. Children may be asked to look at the pictures, read the sentence, and choose if the sentence matches the picture or not.



**Answer Keys** to all the activities are available to download from the website:

[www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

# Inside a Starter Activity Book

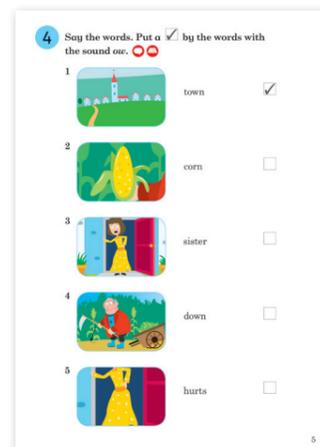
## Phonics focus (Activity Book pages 2—6)



The accompanying Activity Books provide practice of key English language structures and vocabulary and continue to develop the children's phonics skills. These activities provide further practice of the key sounds that have been introduced in the Reader, as well as develop the children's sound recognition, association, and differentiation skills.



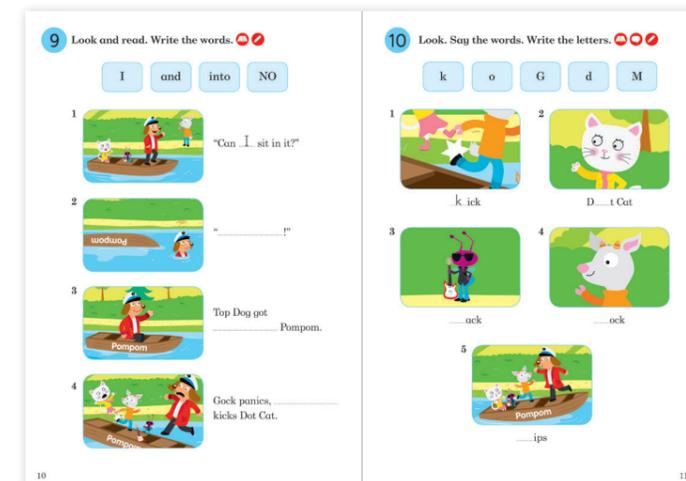
Sound association activities ask children to listen to the sounds they can hear in a word as they write the word to match the picture. This develops a child's oral blending and segmenting, as well as their listening and writing skills.



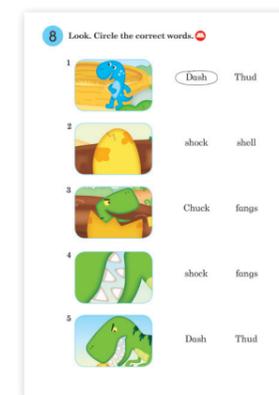
Sound differentiation activities help children to hear the phonemes in a word and locate their graphemes. This develops children's blending skills to read, as well as their segmenting skills to write and spell.

**Answer Keys** to all the activities are available to download from the website:  
[www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

## Reading, spelling, and writing (Activity Book pages 7—15)

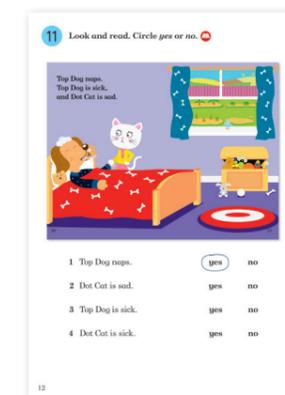


These activities aid progression from oral blending and segmenting, to the practice of blending sounds to successfully read a word, and segment phonemes to spell accurately. Earlier activities encourage children to locate graphemes and correctly select a word that matches a picture, as well as write and spell words to complete a task. Later activities develop the ability to read and understand simple sentences in order to complete the task.



At word level, activities to check the children's reading and writing skills include:

- Find words in a word snake
- Draw lines to match words to pictures
- Write words to match the pictures
- Read and circle the correct words

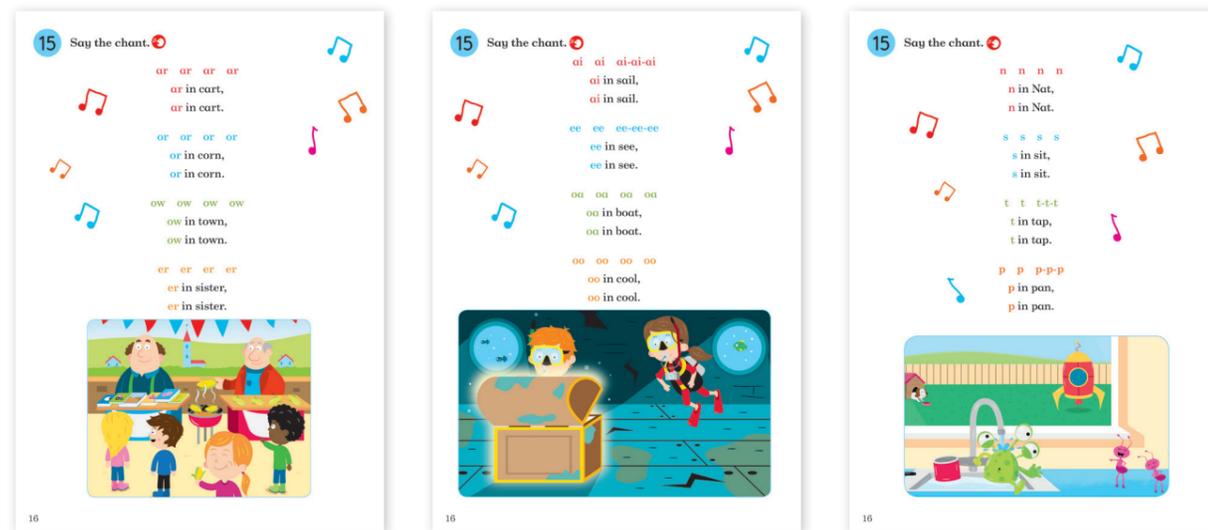


At sentence level, activities offering practice in reading whole sentences and recognizing graphemes include:

- Look at the picture, read the sentence, and color the correct word
- Complete the words using the correct graphemes
- Look at the pictures, read the sentences, and choose if they are right or wrong

**Answer Keys** to all the activities are available to download from the website:  
[www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

# Using Chants



Saying and repeating **chants** contributes to children's cognitive development. It helps to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills, and to develop children's memory. The chants also support children's physical development — acting out the chant can improve coordination, and develop fine and gross motor skills.

Children's linguistic skills are improved as chants support phonemic awareness, drawing attention to the pronunciation of individual sounds, and the intonation and rhythm of the English language. They are also easy to memorize.

Above all else, the chants are fun and sociable. They encourage cooperation and are suitable for different learning styles.

The chants on page 16 of the *Ladybird Readers Activity Books* provide a grand finale which children will love. They target the focus sounds used in the story, and provide meaningful, fun repetition through catchy rhythms.

## Activities

- Before listening, children can match the sounds in the chants to the Flashcards. Show them the Flashcards of the sounds and the words with those sounds.
- Divide the children into sound and word groups. Give each sound group a sound from the chant, and each word group a word from the chant. When listening to the chant, the sound groups should join in with their sound, and the word groups should chant their word.
- After listening to the chants, encourage the children to think of more words with the key sounds. They could even make a new chant by substituting the words in the recorded chants with their own.

Audio recordings of the chants are available to download from:  
[www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

# Using Flashcards



The downloadable **Flashcards** can be used in many different ways.

## Activities

- **Discovery bag**  
Choose Flashcards for words you would like to pre-teach or revise with the children, and put them in a brightly colored bag or box. Slowly take each card out of the bag or box, and ask the children to say the word.
- **Find me a...?**  
Place the Flashcards on the wall. Mime a word for the children to point to. Once the children are confident in this, ask them to mime the words for their partner to guess.
- **Whispering game**  
Ask the children to sit in a circle, and place the Flashcards in the middle of the circle, on the floor. Whisper one of the Flashcard words to the child on your left. The whisper is passed from child to child. The last child picks up the card representing the word they heard. Next time, whisper a word to the second child on your left, and so on.
- **Who has got the...?**  
Ask a number of children to stand at the front of the room. Give each of these children a Flashcard to hold behind their back. Ask, "Who has got the...?", and encourage the other children to guess. They should shout out the name of a child at the front, who then shows their Flashcard. Continue until the children remember who has each word.
- **Categories**  
Drop all the Flashcards on the floor (as if by mistake), and ask each child to pick one Flashcard up. The children should take it in turns to show their Flashcard, and say what it is. Then, encourage the children to put their cards into categories. Ask, "Who has got an animal?", "Who has got a fruit?"
- **Sound matching**  
Give a Flashcard to each child. Ask the children to find another child who has a card with a sound that matches theirs.

**Flashcards** for all of the Starter Level books are available to download from the website:  
[www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

# Drama activities with Ladybird Readers

**Role-play and drama** are powerful teaching tools through which children can develop their communication skills in a second language. Drama brings language to life, and makes it real, purposeful, and personal. It also helps to develop children's interpersonal skills as they collaborate, make decisions, organize, and delegate roles.

## Starting out in drama

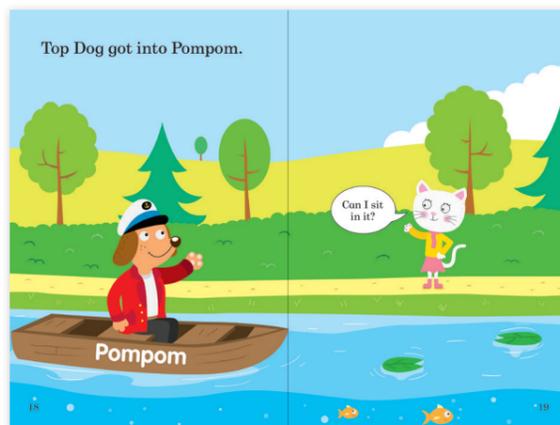
You can begin to familiarize the class with drama activities through mime, gestures, sound, and imitation.

### Activities

- Use an English-speaking puppet to encourage the children to speak independently about everyday topics, such as their likes and dislikes. This can generate self-confidence, and prepare children for more involved drama activities.
- Encourage the children to mime actions as you read the story. This helps them to make the connection between language and physical expression.
- Prompt the children to think of an action to represent each phoneme. They could do actions as they listen to the story.
- Ask the children to make animal noises or sound effects to accompany the story.
- Encourage the children to imitate voices from the story, using expression and intonation to show that a character is happy, sad, angry, or excited.

## Extended drama activities

Once the children feel more confident speaking English, you can move on to slightly more advanced techniques. These include simple role-play and drama, using language related to the Readers, such as "Can I sit in it?", "Yes!". If the Reader has plenty of dialogue, the children can act out the story.



A role-play script for each Starter Reader is available to download from the website: [www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

## Managing drama activities

Setting up a role-play or drama activity carefully will help it to succeed, so try to consider the following in your planning.

- Use the available space effectively (move chairs and tables to create a stage).
- Establish a clear framework with a step-by-step lesson plan.
- Think about the language the children will need and practice this in advance.
- Prepare props, such as drawings, objects, backdrops, puppets, or masks.

## Making props

Making props for role-play and drama is something that the children can be involved in. This type of activity helps to bring the language and story context to life. It provides another opportunity to revisit and reinforce key language, and is a sociable, collaborative, and creative way to explore the story. There are all kinds of craft activities you could use, depending on the story context.

### Activities

#### ● Reusing items

Some props will be existing items that children can find and reuse. These might include empty food packages, hats, scarves, bags, glasses, shells, leaves, feathers, or any other easily obtainable item.

#### ● Create a prop box

Prop boxes can be grouped by theme, such as on the farm, at the zoo, at the doctors, or on the beach. These props will spark the children's imagination, encouraging them to initiate role-play and exploration.

#### ● Masks

Make, color, or paint simple face masks for the children to wear during role-play. These could be animal masks or character masks. Card or felt are good materials to use.

#### ● Headbands

These are a useful alternative to masks, and can be made out of card. Children can draw and decorate them according to the language and story context.

#### ● Puppets

Simple finger or stick puppets really capture the interest of young children. They help to foster children's social interaction with their peers, and are ideal to use in chants, acting, and role-play.

#### ● Origami

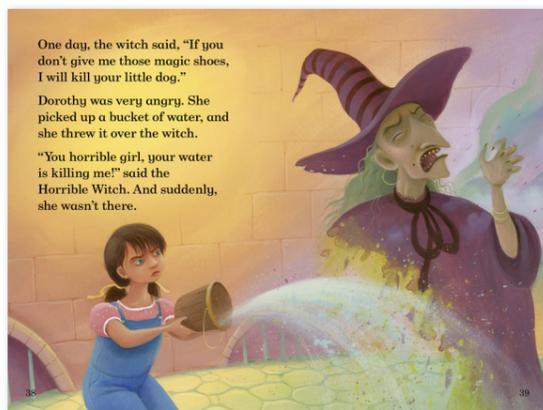
Children are fascinated by the way that something familiar and tangible can be made from just a piece of paper. Dogs, cats, boats, and hats are particularly straightforward, and can be decorated and used in drama activities.



# Using Ladybird Readers (levels 1 – 6) in the classroom

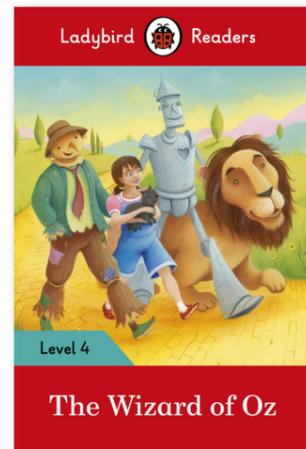
Children aged five to eight learn first from sharing a book with an expert reader who reads aloud to them. As a classroom teacher, you will begin by choosing a book for the whole class to share as you read aloud or listen to the free audio download. Children can follow using their own copy of the Reader. The youngest children learn basic skills, such as how to follow the text from left to right. Older children will know how to read, but will still enjoy hearing the book read to them, because it helps them to follow the story.

If you put lots of expression into your reading, children will learn how your voice changes from making statements to asking questions, and how dialogue sounds different from the narration of the story. So, for example, if you were reading the page below, you would speak in the angry voice of the witch as she asks Dorothy for the shoes. Different voices could also be created for the lion, tin man, and scarecrow to differentiate their characters and give them color, depth, and charm.



## Before reading

Use the book's cover and the **Picture words** page at the beginning of each Reader to capture the children's interest. Hold up the cover of *The Wizard of Oz*, for example. Ask questions such as: "Who is she?"; "What kind of animal is this?"; "Where are they?"; and, "Where are they going?" to check whether the children already know something about the story and its key words.



Write the Picture words on the board, or use the Flashcards, so that learners can focus on the shape of the word. Point out the letters in the word and pronounce the sound that each letter makes. Then say the whole word, so that the children hear how the letter sounds come together. Get the children to pronounce the whole words after you.



## During reading

Read the whole story aloud or listen to the audio download, but check that the children are following. Be prepared to stop and help them if they become lost. At the end, check the children's understanding, referring to three or four pictures in the book from its beginning, middle, and end. This helps to develop children's skills in **top-down processing** by enabling them to make a mental map of the storyline.

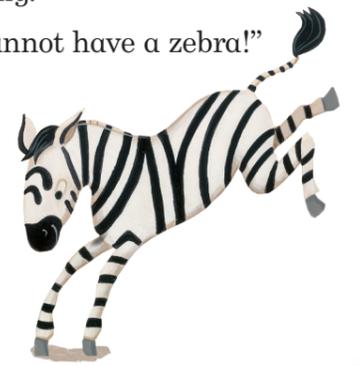
Even the youngest children should be able to follow the printed sentences in their books on a second reading. They begin to grasp the structure of how one sentence builds from the previous sentence. Ask the children to put their finger on the beginning of each sentence and trace through each of its parts as you say it. This method of **finger following** helps make them aware that their eye is tracking from left to right across the line of printed text. The ability to eye-track from word to word is an important part of **bottom-up processing**.

## Listen and repeat

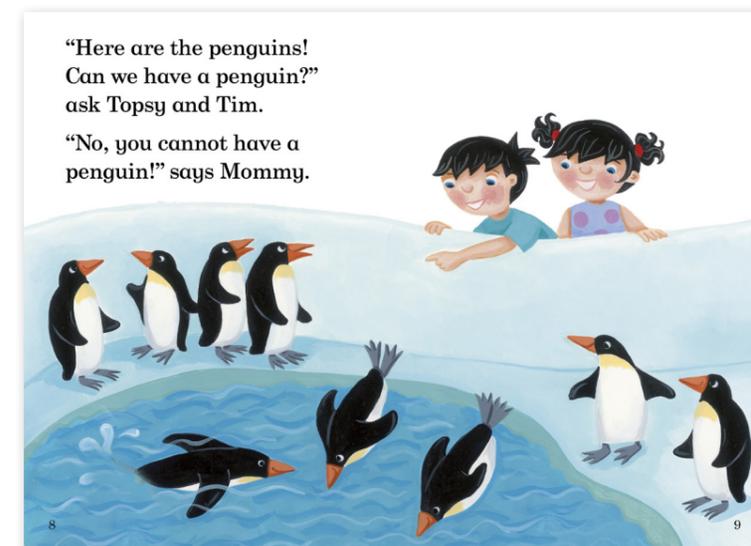
Traditional stories often have phrases in dialogues that are repeated throughout the text. Encourage the children to join in your reading of a story by repeating these phrases. For example, they can repeat this dialogue from *Topsy and Tim: Go to the Zoo* (Level 1).

"No, you cannot have a penguin!" says Mommy.

"No, you cannot have a zebra!" says Dad.



Gradually increase the amount that children can repeat from the text, to develop their reading confidence.



## Paired reading

**Paired reading** helps to give children the confidence to read aloud, by sharing the reading with an adult or an older child. The child and the “expert reader” take turns to read a page or a part in a dialogue.

## After reading

Reading should always be followed by comprehension checks. The activities at the end of the Readers will help you check general comprehension. You can also reinforce children’s mental map by recreating the story visually. For example, they could draw the storyline, or work together to act out the story.

You will also need to work on **bottom-up** word recognition. Start with familiar words that begin or end with the consonants **s, t, p,** and **l**, and then move on to other consonants. Write the words on cards, with the initial letter in a different color. Then, ask children to find the same word in their books. Use the same method to get children to recognize vowels in the middle of words.

After this, introduce **spelling** activities. Teach children to learn how to spell words by the method of **Look, Cover, Write, Check**. Children look at the printed word; cover the word; write the word themselves; then check it against the original.

You can also play **games** with word cards or Flashcards to encourage the children to read quickly at sight. For example, divide the class into two teams and put two words on the board, such as *Venus* and *Jupiter*, and say one word out loud. A child from each team has to race to the board to touch the correct word first.

## Independent reading

As children become confident in reading, they can choose their own books and work at their own pace. This is most likely to happen at Level 4 in the *Ladybird Readers* series. Before they start reading the books, ask them what they already know about the topics and what they want to find out. If the children are reading *Sam and the Robots* (Level 4), for example, ask them what they already know about robots. Then, ask them what other things they’d like to learn about robots. Write some questions on the board about the robots in the story for the children to answer after reading; this will help them to organize their mental map of the text. When they have finished the story, ask them to tell you the answers to your questions and also to complete the activities at the back of the book. Another idea is to ask children to write a review of the book for others in the class.

A **Lesson Plan** for each Reader is available to download from the *Ladybird Readers* website.

The image shows a lesson plan for 'Alice in Wonderland' at Level 4. It includes sections for 'During reading', 'Before reading', and 'Differentiation'. The 'During reading' section asks children to read the story and answer questions. The 'Before reading' section asks children to think about the cover of the book. The 'Differentiation' section provides suggestions for supporting and challenging children. Below the lesson plan is a cartoon rabbit character wearing a purple vest and a green hat, holding a pocket watch.

## Using *Ladybird Readers* at home

Sharing a book at home with a parent or caregiver is one of the most powerful reading experiences for children. As homework, you and your child may reread together the Reader that the whole class is using at school. Or you may have chosen your own books to read. Either way, you are able to work at your child’s own pace and, where relevant, relate the book to experiences you have had together as a family.

Use the same **before reading** and **during reading** techniques as recommended on pages 24 to 25 for classroom use. **Paired reading** is also particularly recommended in this situation. If children have difficulty saying a word, give them a short time to correct themselves, but if they can’t do this, just say the word quietly and move on to the next part of the book.

Some parents are happy to read to their child in English; others feel more comfortable if they can play an audio version downloaded from the internet. At other times, your child may want to listen and read on their own. Please visit [www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk) for free audio downloads and extra material for each book.



The image displays a grid of Ladybird Readers book covers. Each cover includes the title, level, and a small illustration. The books shown are:

- Level 1: *How are you, Spot?*
- Level 2: *Farmer Carl*
- Level 3: *The Empty Pot*
- Level 4: *The Wish*
- Level 5: *The Pony School News*
- Level 6: *Forests*
- Level 5: *Scuderia Ferrari: Famous Races*
- Level 6: *King Arthur*

# How to use the Reader activities (levels 1—6)

## Comprehension of meaning

In Level 1, the first activity often tests comprehension of key words. Children read a sentence, for example, “This is the girl.”, and put a  if the sentence matches the picture, or a  if it does not.

There is also often a selection of simple true or false questions for children to work their way through.

Another activity to test comprehension requires children to read incomplete sentences about the story and then write in the missing word.

“What?” and “Where?” questions, such as those found in activity 11 in *The Red Knight* (Level 3), test a higher level of comprehension. These require children to produce a spoken or written response. At first, children say or write one-word answers, such as *yes* or *no*. Then, they progress to whole sentences.



## Decoding words and building sentences

Reordering jumbled letters to form a word from a picture prompt, finding the hidden words in a word search, and solving crossword puzzles are all activities that help children decode individual words.

Children also need to pay attention to the word order and grammar in sentences. Two activities that practice this include making sentences from jumbled words, and finding the matching halves of sentences.

## Vocabulary

Each Reader contains a **Picture words** section at the beginning of the book. This gives children a way to check the meaning of words they may not know or remember. When children learn the meaning of words, it is an important step forward in using words independently. For example, activity 1 of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* (Level 4) asks children to match a definition with a key word, such as, “This person’s job is to make a town safe and clean for all the people. (mayor)” Encourage learners at Level 4 to make their own dictionary of words and definitions.

11 Ask and answer the questions with a friend.



1 How many knights are there?  
There are two knights.

2 Where is Tom?

3 What is Tom saying to the Red Knight?

4 What are the Red Knight and his horse wearing?

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1 Choose the correct words and write them on the lines.

Hamelin rats mayor town  
cat spoon mountain river

1 This is the name of the town in the story. Hamelin \_\_\_\_\_

2 The people of Hamelin wanted these small animals to leave the town. \_\_\_\_\_

3 This person’s job is to make a town safe and clean for all the people. \_\_\_\_\_

4 This place is a very high hill. \_\_\_\_\_

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## Writing

Many of the reading skills activities also develop children’s writing skills. First, get children to practice writing sentences to answer questions in the book. Then, encourage them to make their own “zigzag book” version of a story.\*

10 Read the questions. Write the answers.

1 Why did the fairy visit Pinocchio again?  
Because he was being \_\_\_\_\_ a good boy.

2 Why did the fairy think Pinocchio was being a good boy?  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 Why did Pinocchio and Geppetto jump up and down?  
\_\_\_\_\_



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## Speaking

The speaking activities in the books give children four reasons to communicate with others in English:

- 1 To talk about the story and their response to it, for example, in *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* (Level 4), “What was the mayor’s biggest mistake?”
- 2 To ask and find out information, for example, in *Dinosaurs* (Level 2), “Which dinosaur was this? What color was it?”

7 Ask and answer the questions with a friend.



1 Which dinosaur was this?  
This was Velociraptor.

2 What color was it?

3 Was it a big or a little dinosaur?

4 What did it use to fight?



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- 3 To relate what they have read to their personal experience, for example, in *Peter Rabbit Goes to the Treehouse* (Level 2), “Would you like to make a treehouse with your friends?”
- 4 To compare pictures, for example, in *Sharks* (Level 3), “Work with a friend. Look at the two pictures. Talk about these two sharks.”



To get the children to talk to each other, you need to demonstrate how to work with a partner. Encourage two children to ask and answer questions, working as partners, in front of the class. Then, get every child to work with a partner. Go around the class to listen and give feedback.

## Using the audio downloads

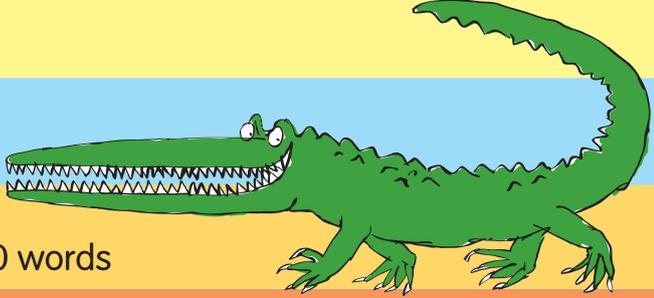
All the Readers have an audio download available in a choice of British English or American English. Children can either read independently while listening to the audio version or listen to the story without reading. The audio recordings also help children to practice intonation and pronunciation, and can be used at home as well as in the classroom. All audio downloads are available at [www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

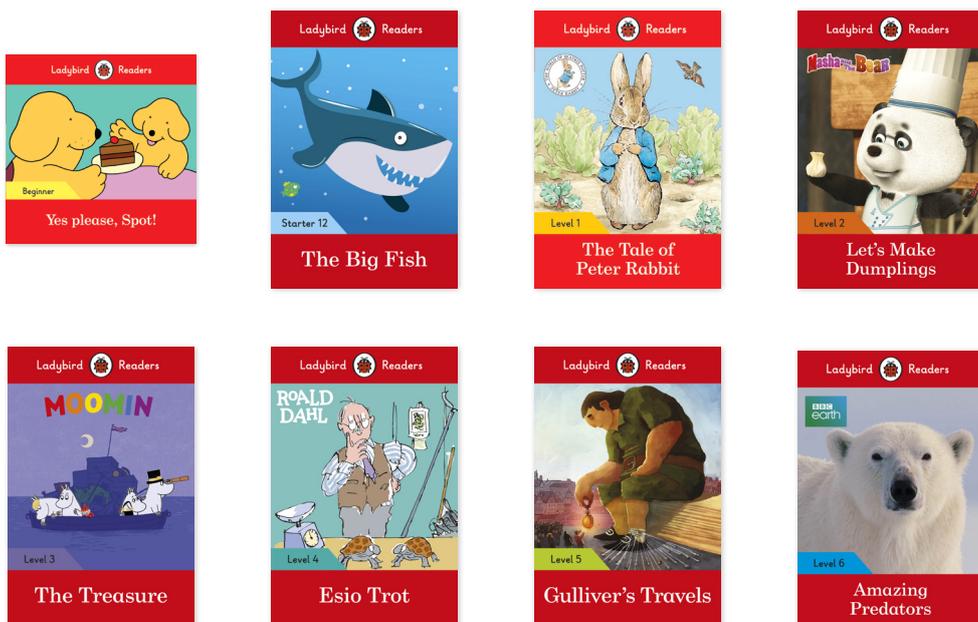
\* A “zigzag book” is a long strip of eight pictures with a sentence underneath each picture to describe the stage of the story. The pictures are folded back-to-back in eight equal sections using an accordion pleat, to create a small eight-page book. Children draw their own pictures and copy sentences to make a personal version of the story to take home.



# Buying Ladybird Readers

The *Ladybird Readers* series covers five levels, and is designed to take children from Pre-A1 to A2 in the **CEFR** framework. It provides practice activities for children working towards the **Cambridge English: Young Learners** Starters, Movers, and Flyers exams.

Beginner	First Phrases 25—50 words	
Starter	Pre-A1 50—100 words	
Level 1	Pre-A1 YLE Starters • 100—200 words	
Level 2	A1 YLE Movers • 200—300 words	
Level 3	A1+ YLE Movers • 300—600 words	
Level 4	A2 YLE Flyers • 600—900 words	
Level 5	A2 YLE Flyers / KET • 900—1,500 words	
Level 6	A2 YLE Flyers / KET • 1,500—2,000 words	



To order **Ladybird Readers**, please contact your local distributor. More details can be found at:  
[www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk](http://www.ladybirdeducation.co.uk)

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